United Nations S/2003/508

Security Council

Distr.: General
30 April 2003

Original: English

Letter dated 28 April 2003 from the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing with reference to a note circulated on 25 April 2003 by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea, as Chair of the Asian Group for the month of April 2003, forwarding a copy of your letter dated 24 April 2003 as President of the Security Council for this month, concerning the wrap-up session of the Council on 30 April 2003.

Your aforementioned letter contains the suggestion that two delegations from "each regional group" will be expected to take the floor during the debate. The Council's understanding appears to be that these delegations will "present their national views and not a regional position".

It is India's view that in a regional group as diverse as the Asian Group, it would be unreasonable and contrary to normal practice to expect any one Member State or even two Member States to represent the Asian region in such a debate in the Security Council. It is in recognition of the nature and diversity of its membership that the Asian Group has confined itself to discussing only candidatures and that it does not discuss substantive issues. We therefore find it difficult to accept the idea that delegations of non-member States speak in the wrap-up session of the Council on this basis.

Furthermore, the limitations on the number of delegations that would be allowed to speak from each regional group also appear illogical and arbitrary. Regional groups in the United Nations are different in size and composition. The Asian and African groups have 53 Member States each; the group of Latin American and Caribbean States has 33; the group of Western European and other States has 28; and Eastern Europe has 21. To impose an identical number of speakers from each of those groups without giving due regard to their size and composition does not appear reasonable.

In our view, any delegation that wishes to speak in the wrap-up session and has expressed a particular interest in so doing should be allowed to speak. To impose a limit on the number of such speakers, whether on the basis of regional groupings or by resort to other arbitrary modalities, such as the drawing of lots etc., would run counter to the objective of greater transparency and openness in the functioning of the Council.

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Although it is, admittedly, within the purview of the Council to decide how it will structure its own deliberations, we are unclear as to whether the purpose of the wrap-up session is to review the work of the Council during the month, as in the past, or to hold an open meeting on an altogether new theme, as has been decided by you for the month of April. In our view, a theme such as the role of the United Nations in post-conflict situations merits a full-fledged public meeting of the Council, in which all interested delegations are allowed to take part under the relevant provisional rules of procedure of the Council, and not a restricted debate during a wrap-up session.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) V. K. **Nambiar**